



TOWN OF ROCKLAND

Board of Selectmen

Town Hall
242 Union Street
Rockland, Massachusetts 02370

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BOS MINUTES of APRIL 21, 2015

Chairman:

Edward F. Kimball
Vice Chairman:
Larry J. Ryan

Selectmen:

Lawrence J. Chaffee
Michael P. Johnson
Korey M. Welch

Town Administrator:

Allan R. Chiocca

Executive Assistant:

Susan M. Ide

SELECTMEN'S MEETING Tuesday, April 21, 2015 @ 7 p.m.

**H. BERNARD MONAHAN MEMORIAL ROOM
TOWN HALL, 242 UNION STREET
ROCKLAND, MASSACHUSETTS**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE MOS

For former Rockland Selectmen Luigi Pace,
Rockland High School Senior Jared Quirk and
Water Department Employee Bob Hussey

Chairman Kimball read:

The audience, participants and general public should be aware that any and all portions this open meeting may be recorded by audio and video resources. All or some of this meeting may be rebroadcast periodically by WRPS or other outlets. Persons wanting a DVD copy of this meeting should contact WRPS or the BOS office, a small fee will be charged.

Reorganization of BOS

~MOTION to nominate Mr. Kimball as Chairman by Mr. Ryan, 2nd by Mr. Welch passed 4-0.

~MOTION to nominate Mr. Ryan as Vice-Chairman by Mr. Kimball, 2nd by Mr. Johnson passed 4-0.

1. OPEN FORUM

John Ward former Rockland Representative to the SSTTDC Board (Southfield) prior to the legislation passed in August 2014 spoke to the BOS (see attached).

MINUTES

2. Open Session Minutes of April 6, 2015

~MOTION to approve by Mr. Johnson, 2nd by Mr. Welch passed 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3. Food Party- All Alcohol Application

~Motion to open hearing by Mr. Welch, 2nd by Mr. Johnson passed 4-0.

There was no discussion.

~MOTION to close hearing by Mr. Welch, 2nd by Mr. Ryan passed 4-0.

~MOTION to approve the application by Mr. Johnson, 2nd by Mr. Welch passed 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Keno request

~MOTION to approve "No Objection" position regarding the Keno application of E Z MART 2 by Mr. Welch, 2nd by Mr. Ryan passed 3-1 (Johnson).

5. Historical Commission new appointees

~Motion to approve appointments of Marcia Putnam and Thomas Reagan to the Rockland Historical Commission by Mr. Ryan, 2nd by Mr. Welch passed 4-0.

6. Report of the Capital Planning Committee

Scott McKinley presented the report of the Capital Planning Committee.

~MOTION to accept the report and approve by Mr. Ryan, 2nd by Mr. Johnson passed 4-0.

10. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE-TA Chiocca

- Mr. Chiocca extended his condolences to the families of Jared Quirk and Bob Hussey.**
- Reminded everyone of the upcoming April 25th Little League/Softball Opening Day parade.**
- Announced the annual Rabies Clinic would be held on April 25th as well.**
- TA Chiocca discussed the Rail Trail clean-up scheduled for April 25th.**
- Reminded the public Town Meeting is May 4, 2015 @ 7pm.**
- Reminded the public that personal fences should place within the homeowner's boundary line and not on Town property.**
- Requested permission for a Street Block Party for a portion of Everett Street 6/13
~MOTION to approve provided the Police Dept. approves by Mr. Welch, 2nd by Mr. Ryan passed 4-0.**
- Distributed and discussed the Adopt a Hydrant program flyers.**
- Reminded the BOS of the upcoming Memorial Day Parade.
~MOTION to approve the Memorial Day Parade route by Mr. Welch, 2nd by Mr. Ryan passed 4-0.**
- Announced the current Board of Registrars vacancies.**
- Announced the available of an affordable housing unit on Northfield Drive.**
- Announced FEMA emergency funding approval for the 1st winter storm of January 25 -27th.**
- Finally indicated Larry Chaffee continues to make some progress and he appreciates everyone's cards and good wishes.**

SELECTMAN'S COMMENTS

Comments and opinions expressed by individual members do not necessarily reflect the views of all of the BOS and are the opinions and comments of only the individual member.

Mr. Welch **-Expressed condolences to the Quirk and Hussey families.**

Mr. Johnson -Expressed condolences to the Quirk family and the students of this year's High School class after suffering 3 student losses during the year.


Mr. Ryan -Also expressed his thoughts on behalf of the Hussey and Quirk families.
-Congratulated the new Town Clerk Donna Shortall.
-Expressed appreciation for the situation the Town is in now versus 6 years ago when he left the BOS.


Mr. Kimball -Expressed his feelings to the Rockland Families regarding their recent losses.

20. EXECUTIVE SESSION for discussion regarding union negotiations

~MOTION to go into Executive Session for negotiations not to reconvene passed by Roll Call Vote 4-0.

Open Meeting ended at 8:43 P.M.


Allan R. Chiocca
Town Administrator


Larry J. Ryan Vice Chairman
For the Rockland Board of Selectmen

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.



John Ward
Comments to the Rockland Board of Selectmen
April 21, 2015

For 13 years, I served the Town of Rockland as a member of the Tri-Town Board of Directors. I have previously served on the Rockland Board of Selectmen and other boards and committees.

On August 20, 2014, legislation was signed at the statehouse to benefit the out of state, multi-billion dollar, venture capitalist firm Starwood. The legislation put Tri-Town, the local redevelopment authority, out of business. Furthermore, the legislation exposes the Towns of Abington, Rockland and Weymouth to financial risk. The worst part, ladies and gentlemen, is the fact that your legal right to vote on this project as specified by law was completely ignored.

In 2003, Lennar was the firm selected by Tri-Town to be the master developer of the project. Lennar had the expertise in redeveloping former military facilities on the West Coast. In addition, they had the finances to help make it happen. The new redevelopment plan was approved by all three towns in 2005. Lennar agreed to develop commercial and residential properties, provide union construction jobs, recreational amenities, and host community agreements with each of three towns.

The recession of 2008 had a chilling effect on the real estate markets all over the country. During this time, Lennar transferred the development of the base to a subsidiary, LNR South Shore, LLC. They decided to name their project Southfield.

The promised jobs for union labor were eliminated at the project when Bill Ryan, LNR's political consultant, "helped negotiate" an agreement that would limit union labor to buildings over three stories.

The host community agreements with all three towns were re-negotiated with the "help" of Bill Ryan.

Starwood cobbled together the new legislation in order to limit their liability and maximize their potential profits. They kept the amount of their skin in the game to an absolute minimum. The consequence of this is that liabilities have been transferred onto the taxpayers. Everything that protected the towns was removed such as: residential/commercial phasing, non performance penalties, and no municipal costs to the towns. Most of all, the right of the voters to approve any major changes to the project was eliminated.

Starwood did not purchase LNR for the Southfield project. They were primarily interested in LNR's mortgage backed securities business. Southfield was part of the package. Starwood's negotiations to acquire LNR were probably in play since the end of 2012. During 2013, LNR stopped selling land to homebuilders. LNR stopped development on the project even though there was plenty of room for additional building in phase one. In addition, LNR did not develop commercial property as was specified in the reuse plan.

LNR and Starwood dedicated their efforts to create their own legislation that changed the existing law and eliminated the reuse plan without the approval of the towns. The rights of the voters of the three towns, as defined by law, were to be completely ignored. This is contrary to what was voted and approved by the town meetings of Abington, Rockland, and Weymouth.

Starwood stated that the existing plan needed to be changed to increase residential development and put commercial development on hold. Residential development would be extremely lucrative for Starwood but a potential fiscal disaster from a municipal point of view. The Navy conveyed the property to Tri-Town with the express reason for economic development to benefit the three towns not just a developer.

In Starwood's pursuit of their hostile takeover of the project, they identified the weak links in the political chain and exploited them. Starwood had help from House Majority Leader Ron Mariano and Bill Ryan. Bill Ryan has worked behind the scenes to allow LNR/Starwood and Ron Mariano to have clean hands and plausible deniability.

Starwood executed separate memorandums of agreement with the three towns. Weymouth got the one with the most promises. One provision states that all commercial development will take place in Weymouth. Any commercial development within the base property but outside of Weymouth must be approved by the mayor of Weymouth. That means any commercial building on the Rockland side of the base requires the approval of the mayor of Weymouth first.

There is a question as to when Ron Mariano started talks with the Starwood representatives. Mary Parsons of Rockland and Anne Hilbert of Weymouth requested that information from Mr. Mariano. However, they received letters from the General Counsel of the House of Representatives informing them that the Federal Freedom of Information Act does not apply to state representatives in Massachusetts. Mr. Mariano does not have to divulge when he began talks with Starwood. He can operate in secret.

Clearly, Starwood ceased to be a development partner. They took an adversarial position against Tri-Town and conducted a hostile takeover of the project. Starwood does not care about the three towns or the impacts on the communities. They put corporate profits ahead of people. That is why the Tri-Town BOD terminated Starwood in July of 2014. However, Starwood had their legislation re-appoint them as the master developer.

Starwood's legislation is an example of what happens when corporate greed and bad government come together.

Ron Mariano helped Starwood by pushing their legislation through on a voice vote. As a result,

there is nobody on record in the Commonwealth that voted for Starwood's legislation. This is an example of how House Majority Leader Ron Mariano treats the statehouse as his private club.

On December 3, 2014, it was reported in the press that Starwood was refusing to pay \$760,000 in real estate taxes due on November 3, 2014. Starwood finally paid their overdue tax bill on January 15, 2015 after selling a parcel of land to Pulte Homes . Pulte Homes paid \$4.5 million for nineteen acres. Pulte paid the taxes on the nineteen acres at the closing. It appears that Starwood paid the rest of their overdue real estate taxes with proceeds from the land sale. Starwood was also seeking up to \$40 million from the state to connect the East-West Parkway to Route 18.

Where was Starwood's commitment to invest in the future development of the project?

Starwood has now determined that they have squeezed enough money out of this project. It has been announced that Starwood is selling their interest in the base property to LStar Management. There is nothing to stop Starwood from leaving. Any non-performance penalties were eliminated by their legislation. If there is insufficient commercial development to offset the residential development, the three towns will be facing a tremendous fiscal risk.

The original plan that was designed to protect and benefit the towns has been destroyed thanks to Starwood's greed, and arrogance. As a result your legal rights were swept aside by the sordid collaboration of Starwood and a few elected officials at the state and local level.

Ladies and gentlemen, I urge you and the board of selectmen to be vigilant and work to protect the interests of the Town of Rockland.